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India

DOING BRITAIN'S . . .
. . . . DIRTY WORK

By William Marion Reedy
Editor, Reedy's Mirror, St. Louis, Mo.

I WONDER IF PEOPLE are not getting tired of all the "bunk" that is being talked about democracy in this country while they are hearing at the same time of some things that are being done in the name of democracy. There are the cases of the Indian agitators now imprisoned here and held for deportation because of their propaganda in behalf of self-government for their native land.

As practical folk, helpless in the storm of passion, we may have reconciled ourselves to the activities of our authorities against those men while the war was on, in accordance with the theory that we were bound to suppress revolutionary movements calculated to injure the military efforts of our ally, Great Britain. To the extent that the revolutionists were fighting England they were aiding our enemies as well as England's. But the war is over now. One would think that, this being the case, we should not be making war upon the nationalists of India.

Within the past few weeks three more Hindus have been arrested for deportation to India. The men are D. K. Sarkar, in New York, and Bhagwan and Santokh Singh, of Seattle. These, with Gopal Singh, arrested for transportation some months ago, Taraknath Das, just released from Leavenworth prison, and some others, if sent back home, will be in effect condemned to death, for that has been the fate of their fellows in agitation at the hands of the British government.

These men were arrested after the war. What for? Why, for exactly the thing of which Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, Adams and others held in immortal memory by all Americans, were guilty; they have been struggling to free their country from the rule of the stranger.

THEY HAVE BEEN endeavoring to secure for their own people that self-determination about which Woodrow Wilson has been discoursing so eloquently for at least two years. The information upon which they have been arrested

has been supplied by agents, secret and public, of the British Government. The British Consul at San Francisco, Mr. A. Carnegie Ross, has informed our authorities that if he has not already given enough proof against them he can furnish more in practically unlimited quantity.

The idea that our government should send these patriots to the firing squad is enough to make the blood of any true blue American boil in indignation. Judge Van Fleet, of San Francisco, has characterized their offense as "too much love of their Motherland." That they violated the neutrality laws of this country, passed as war measures, is admitted.

For that offense they were tried and convicted. They served their sentences. There can be no just complaint about that as a matter of law, whatever we may think of the wisdom of the justice of such laws in general. It is deliciously atrocious, however, that we should punish these Hindus for a political crime against another country, considering that during all our history until now, we have refused to include under extraditable offenses any political crimes.

It has never been considered a crime for anyone to agitate for the change of forms of government. Born in revolution ourselves, we could not repudiate the principle of action in the exercise and application of which we had our origin.

THIS COUNTRY'S SYMPATHIES have ever been with every people struggling to cast off tyranny. Since when has the spirit of this country changed in this regard? Who changed it, if it has been changed? Why is it that the great daily newspapers of this country have little or nothing to say about the facts of the incarceration of these men who a few years ago would have been hailed as the heroes they are?

The only information that is vouchsafed us on the subject is obtainable solely from circulars disseminated by organizations that are forced thus to present their cause, owing to the fact that publicity otherwise is denied them. The censorship is in operation, voluntarily or under compulsion. We are not permitted in this country to know as much about the uprising in India or in Egypt as are the people of Great Britain.

It is very doubtful that the vast majority of Americans have any knowledge of the efforts being made to send these Hindus back to military execution. I have been amazed to learn how little the people here know of the extent of the revolt against Great Britain, both in India and Egypt, but for the matter of that, they have been kept in ignorance of the nature and scope of the social revolution in England itself.

WHEN LABOR UNIONS and other organizations pass resolutions of sympathy and support for the revolutionists, no news stories are made of such actions. If the American public knew what is being done here to punish the champions of Indian liberty, here in this land dedicated to liberty, I believe there would go up such a protest against the use of our power to strangle the movement for self-rule among the Hindus as would be irresistible.

Nothing is heard about India or Egypt in the United States Senate, but much is said about Shantung. Now, Shantung is bad enough in all conscience, but Shantung is "played up" because, in so doing, the politicians have an opportunity to attack Japan, and there is a large "vote" to be appealed to, especially in the West, by opposing Japanese imperialism.

That Japanese imperialism is no worse, all things considered, than British imperialism, goes without saying. But then, you know, Great Britain is not averse to our putting as many spokes as possible in Japan's wheel. While our newspapers play politics with the politicians as to Japan and Ireland, the public is kept in ignorance of such an iniquity as the use of the institutions and machinery of our government to deliver over to British military power men who, if they have in any way offended against our laws, have paid the penalty therefor and are purged of further guilt.

A few years ago the treatment now being dealt out to the Hindu agitators here would have been unthinkable, for we were then the same country that had tried to help Kossuth's rising in Hungary; that had welcomed heartily the men who tried to overthrow autocracy in Prussia; that had all the goodwill in the world for the efforts of Garibaldi; that had gone to war to free Cuba.

In those days we were not allowing any foreign power to reach over here and grasp for vengeance any man, however humble, who had endeavored to bring about the political emancipation of his countrymen. But a few months ago our President was doing all he could to induce the people of Germany to revolt against their masters. Now we find them tightening the chains upon the people of Egypt by recognizing the British protectorate over that country, and saying and doing nothing to maintain the right of asylum in this land for all those who strive to destroy political and social oppression.

HE HAS CARED AS little for the rights of asylum of the Hindus as, apparently, he has cared for the right of free speech and free press in the cases of the American men and

women now held in our jails and penitentiaries for expressing their dissent from the opinion and will of the majority in support of the war.

All political prisoners—foreign, as well as native or naturalized—in this country should be free, and at once. Every one who believes the old doctrine that this land was "established as a refuge for the oppressed of the earth"—a sentiment that we used to applaud vociferously in Fourth of July oration—should make it his business to register his protest against the proceedings now in progress to send the patriotic Hindus back to India for execution.

We should protest fully and vigorously against the Allies' rule of India and Egypt and against the political and economic subjection of the majority in Ireland, but we should especially protest the abominable perversion of justice in the case of these Hindus. If we permit Britain to use us as she now plans to do, we shall repudiate the most glorious pages in our history.

These Hindus we are holding for deportation have not sinned against us; or, if they have, they have atoned for it. They admit that they want to see British rule in India overthrown, but they emphatically deny that they ever attempted to interfere with or do any harm to the United States government. The whole country should arise in wrath and demand their release.

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By Friends of Freedom for India

IT IS UP TO YOU—

TO PROTEST publicly and privately against these deportation proceedings.

TO WRITE immediately to President Woodrow Wilson, Secretary of Labor, William B. Wilson, to your Congressman and to your local newspapers.

JOIN our organization by sending contributions of $1. up (or $5. yearly sustaining membership) that we may carry these cases before the bar of American public opinion.

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